
What could you do if you held the secrets to what makes awesome teams tick? What are the key ingredients that make up a positive and dynamic relationship between administrators? Leadership Teaming is the key to understanding these dynamics. Mary Lynne Derrington and Cathie West have captured the true essence of what is needed for strong teaming for leadership in our schools.

Readers will discover the critical attributes of the superintendent-principal relationship such as developing trust, valuing interpersonal skills, maintaining a strong work ethic, and keeping communication open. Both authors, one a seasoned superintendent and the other a distinguished school principal, combine their experiences, explore the latest research, and gather the impressions of noteworthy peers to identify "what’s right" about communication, trust, and relationships in teams. Ideas shared include a wide range of supportive guides such as an entry plan for new principals, a code of ethics, and job performance evaluation instruments.

As you read, you’ll be motivated by positive messages applicable to all teaming needs in the school setting. The text is segmented into four key sections; each author, from her own perspective, provides readers with a chapter of insight on each specific topic. As I reviewed the material, I found it refreshing to discover that healthy administrative teams model professional learning communities (PLC). Powerful and essential PLC traits include ensuring a team meets regularly, focuses on learning, solves problems, commits to continuous improvement, and engages members in improving their daily work.

The authors provide research-based plans for team and personal improvement. The concept of taking personal responsibility for your own professional growth is highlighted. For example, West writes: “It takes fifteen minutes to complain about lack of resources. Instead, use those minutes to read something that motivates, teaches, or inspires you to go the extra mile.” Readers will enjoy a kaleidoscope of supportive ideas, including traits of benevolent leaders, the importance of a sense of humor, and being sure to face challenges with optimism.

Imagine the power of using this type of resource as a leadership team book study. No matter what your role is in school administration, there is something to be learned from the messages in these pages.

Reviewed by Melissa D. Patschke, Principal, Upper Providence Elementary School, Royersford, Pennsylvania, mpats@spring-ford.net.


During a time when educating adolescents on effective ways to build positive relationships and bullying are at the forefront in schools and the national media, the authors of Understanding Girl Bullying have put together a remarkable piece of work that may be a stepping stone for solving communication issues among adolescents.

The authors first identify relational and social aggression, and then identify effective solutions for helping students to have an awareness of situations that involve emotional and physical situations of aggression. There are many facets to the conversation of bullying and why it occurs in our schools and this book is a stop on the road toward helping to decrease situations of school bullying. Although the authors acknowledge that bullying among male adolescents does exist, the authors primarily focus their research and suggestions on decreasing incidents of bullying among female adolescents.

It is important to note that bullying is not the only form of aggression that occurs within schools; however, it is the most common. The authors introduce readers to other existing forms of aggression, such as situational and psychological aggression, and what to do about reducing these situations. The authors also identify ways that counselors and administrators can measure forms of aggression and bullying. This is important to note because school leaders need not only know if situations of aggression exist within their schools, but also to what extent.

The book is full of helpful charts and surveys that will help to begin the conversation with students and teachers in an effort to solve the sometimes deadly issue of bullying. My eyes opened wide while reading about the most recent forms of aggression that have become prevalent due to the Internet. Historically, bullying and other forms of aggression may have only occurred at the school or on the phone. However, the authors introduce readers to how much easier it is for bullying to occur and how often it occurs through text messaging and Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and other Internet forums.

This is a must-read resource for school leaders, parents, and politicians since this is a widespread issue that the community must work together to put to an end.

Reviewed by LaQuanda Brown, Principal, Alcovy High School, Covington, Georgia, brown.laquanda@newton.k12.ga.us.
The National Elementary Honor Society is the national student recognition program for grades 4, 5, and 6 promoting Scholarship, Responsibility, Service, and Leadership.

An NEHS chapter at your school:

- Recognizes academic excellence
- Focuses on the whole child
- Promotes a culture of achievement
- Engages and involves all students
- Brings new networks and resources to your staff.

For an application to establish a chapter of NEHS at your school, visit www.nehs.org/newchapter or call 866-599-6347.